



## Welcome to 2009, San Jose

Posted by **Pierluigi Oliverio** on Monday, January 05, 2009

2008 was certainly a roller-coaster ride. From the rise and fall of oil to the housing market collapse and finally the recession. 2009 will be a challenging year for each and every one of us.

The City of San Jose will have a newer City Council. What I mean by newer is that six out of 11 members will have two years experience or less on the council, including Pete Constant, Sam Liccardo, Kansen Chu, Ash Kalra, Rose Herrera and myself. Councilmembers Herrera and Kalra are the newest members, replacing eight-year veterans Dave Cortese and Forest Williams.

The 2009 San Jose city council will be unique in that four of the 11 members will be under 40. I am not a historian of the San Jose City Council but four under 40 certainly seems to be historic for our council. The under-40 club includes Councilmembers Kalra, Liccardo, Madison Nguyen and myself.

In addition, the council has wide racial diversity, with Chinese, Greek, Indian, Italian, Latina and Vietnamese, among others, represented. Also: Of the 10 council members, the make up is half female and half male.

Some insiders try to size up the council based on their endorsements during their political campaigns, or on whether some council members are labor or chamber players, or on the political left or on the political right. In the end, the 2009 council will need to solve big problems, and in my view will need to pull together solutions for residents of San Jose, and not interest groups.

The council has a full plate in 2009 and the years thereafter. As we work to balance the current \$65 million shortfall in the budget. (\$65 million is the same amount the City spent on the **Hayes Mansion** about 10 years ago without voter approval,) We will be working through the ongoing structural deficit, implementing the Green Vision, and making wise land use decisions.

I am looking forward to being part of this new council. Although the future is a bit bleak; I have high hopes that San Jose has good representation in it's elected officials and will do great work.

The first challenge in front of us is the budget. I hope you plan on attending Mayor Reed's Neighborhood Priority Setting meeting on Jan. 24, from 9am-noon at City Hall (free parking). It is important that you provide your feedback on how you would like to see the City spend the money it does have, and perhaps on how the City can deliver services differently.

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